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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: USCENTCOM CDR PETRAEUS' MEETING WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER TAZHIN, AUGUST 13

Classified By: Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland, 1.4 (A), (B), (D)

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: USCENTCOM Commander General David Petraeus met Minister of Foreign Affairs Marat Tazhin on August 13 to discuss U.S.-Kazakhstani military cooperation and request support for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Petraeus specifically requested the deployment of Kazakhstani staff officers to the International Security Assistance Force headquarters in Kabul and explosive ordnance disposal instructors for the training facility at Mazar-i-Sharif. He also responded to President Nazarbayev's offer of a logistics facility in Kazakhstan. The substantive hour-long meeting focused on Kazakhstan's concern that insecurity in Afghanistan poses a direct threat to Central Asia through the northward flow of Islamic militants and narcotics. Tazhin asked Petraeus for his assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, described Kazakhstani plans to provide humanitarian and development assistance to Afghanistan, and urged that the United States procure goods from Kazakhstan as part of the U.S.-Kazakhstan agreement for the Northern Distribution Network that provides for the commercial transit of non-lethal supplies for U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Tazhin told Petraeus the improved U.S.-Russian relationship is helpful for Kazakhstan and makes it easier for Kazakhstan to cooperate with the United States on many issues, including Afghanistan. END SUMMARY.

2. (S/NF) General Petraeus provided a comprehensive assessment of the situation and U.S. policy directions in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He asked that Kazakhstan consider sending several staff officers to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul and instructors to the Explosive Ordnance Disposal training facility in Mazar-i-Sharif. He emphasized that the personnel would serve in noncombatant roles. Petraeus also told Tazhin that we welcomed President Nazarbayev's offer of a logistics/transportation hub in Kazakhstan because "we need additional capacity and a back-up to the Manas Transit Center in Kyrgyzstan." Petraeus mentioned that in his earlier meeting with the Minister of Defense, he offered to send a team of logistics experts to assess opportunities and develop options, and the Minister accepted the offer. Tazhin listened

closely but responded, "These are questions for the Ministry of Defense to decide." [COMMENT: This was the proper diplomatic response, but, in fact, Tazhin will be deeply involved in deciding a response to these requests because President Nazarbayev will take into close consideration when deciding his response the "sensitivities" of Kazakhstan's Central Asian neighbors and Russia, as Security Council Chairman Suleymenov made explicit in a subsequent meeting (septel). END COMMENT.] General Petraeus also mentioned that technicians were working to get the Huey-II helicopters up and running by September 6 -- as soon as the parts clear customs.

U.S. APPROACH TO AF-PAK "ABSOLUTELY CORRECT"

¶3. (C) Tazhin told Petraeus that Afghanistan poses a direct threat to Kazakhstan and the rest of Central Asia because of the northward flow of Islamic militants and narcotics. Tazhin asked Petraeus -- for whom he professed respect for his role as a "decision-maker" who successfully resolved "a serious and tense situation" in Iraq -- to evaluate the current situation in Afghanistan. In response to Petraeus' description of the current U.S. "integrated approach" to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Tazhin said this strategy is "absolutely correct." Tazhin stated that the solution to instability in Afghanistan includes "more than just military solutions," noting he was concerned about what would happen when U.S. and coalition forces eventually leave Afghanistan.

AFGHANISTAN TO BE OSCE PRIORITY

¶4. (C) Tazhin said encouraging stability and development in Afghanistan will be one of Kazakhstan's priorities during its 2010 OSCE chairmanship. Tazhin called the threat from extremist groups

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and narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan "not only possible, but real." In view of this threat Tazhin said that, despite budgetary constraints, Kazakhstan was committed to supporting regional OSCE institutions and the Almaty-based Central Asian Information and Coordinating Center (CARICC) to strengthen border protection.

FREE EDUCATION FOR AFGHAN STUDENTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

¶5. (C) Tazhin also confirmed Kazakhstan would continue to support stabilizing and developing Afghanistan through technical and financial support, and is working to finalize its 2009-2011 assistance plan for Afghanistan. Tazhin said his government will initiate a program to provide free university and college education to 1,000 Afghan students -- primarily medical staff, agricultural specialists, and teachers. Tazhin explicitly asked for U.S. transportation from Afghanistan to Kazakhstan for the students. Petraeus said we would need to consider this request, but pointed out that "an air transportation hub" -- such as the logistics facility President Nazarbayev has twice suggested -- might make such an arrangement more feasible. Petraeus also noted that as the current global financial crisis abates, Kazakhstan might consider purchasing C-130Js and that these could also be used to help with the transportation needs.

KAZAKHSTAN SUPPORTS THE NORTHERN DISTRIBUTION NETWORK...

¶6. (C) Tazhin said Kazakhstan intended to continue to support U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan. (NOTE: Kazakhstan has provided critical support for the U.S. effort to stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan, primarily by participating in the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), and through bilateral agreements from 2001 and 2002 that allow U.S. military aircraft supporting Operation Enduring Freedom to transit Kazakhstani air space cost-free and to make emergency landings in Kazakhstan when conditions do not permit landing at Kyrgyzstan's Manas Air Base. END NOTE.) Tazhin also told Petraeus that his government hoped the United States would consider increasing procurement in Kazakhstan, and Petraeus replied that he recently signed a policy directive to buy locally where possible.

... AND INQUIRES ABOUT U.S.-RUSSIAN AGREEMENTS

¶7. (C) Tazhin also asked Petraeus about the status of U.S.-Russian negotiations to allow the shipment of lethal goods through Russian

territory. Tazhin asked that the United States inform Kazakhstan if it is considering shipping lethal goods by road or rail. He said he welcomed the improved U.S.-Russia relationship, which "is completely different from a year and a half ago." He noted this more cooperative relationship is helpful for Kazakhstan and makes it easier for Kazakhstan to cooperate with the United States on many issues, including Afghanistan.

18. (U) USCENTCOM has cleared this cable.

HOAGLAND